



“That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics.”

~ Aldo Leopold



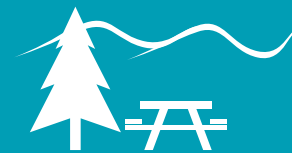
---

PLAN ELEMENT

---

Chapter 10

# PARKS & OPEN SPACE





# 10.1 Background & Analysis

## 10.1.1 Introduction

Albuquerque and Bernalillo County are defined by remarkable public Open Space, both within and bordering the developed landscape. Open Space conserves land from development and provides a shape and setting for the urban areas in this region. Parks provide visual, social, and psychological relief from the built environment. Together, they contribute to the community's livability and are indispensable to our quality of life.



Image credit: Bill Tondreau

Beautiful, inspiring, and accessible parks are essential to the health of a city. Parks provide recreational opportunities, a space for community gatherings, environmental benefits, and more desirable neighborhoods and communities. This region will have a network of diverse parks, providing a variety of recreation opportunities in each neighborhood. A network of multi-use trails will connect the parks with neighborhoods, ensuring that all residents can easily access them on foot, by bike, by transit, or by car.

Parks, Open Space, and trails preserve and manage natural resources for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, as well as for environmental and ecological systems that occur within these lands. Parks and Open Spaces also serve as green infrastructure that enhances sustainability and resilience by absorbing rainfall, storing and conveying storm water, and releasing oxygen via grass and trees. Linear Open Spaces provide corridors that connect the different parts of the region for drainage and wildlife.

*This chapter is primarily concerned with Open Space owned and/or managed by the City or County, and will generally use this term. However, the County Parks and Recreation Department uses the term "Open Space" (note the capital letters), while the City uses the term "Major Public Open Space (MPOS)." Where "open space" (note the lower case) is used, the text refers to lands owned and managed by other agencies, sometimes with different goals and priorities, or privately owned land.*

The high quality of our parks and Open Space creates a sense of place and enhances our economic competitiveness by attracting travelers, skilled employees, and jobs in a market increasingly focused on unique identity and engaging places. Coordination among parks, recreation, Open Space, and natural and cultural resource agencies will enhance access to the highest quality leisure, cultural, and natural resources for all Albuquerque Area residents.

While this chapter is primarily concerned with Open Space owned and/or managed by the County or the City, the Land Use chapter introduces a larger "Community Green Space" concept that also includes other publicly-owned lands that are managed for a variety of purposes. Community Green Space also includes drainage and irrigation ditches and drains that are not a part of the Open Space system.

# Applying the Guiding Principles

Each element of the Comp Plan uses guiding principles as the basis for its goals, policies, and actions. The six guiding principles and their definitions were developed from input received during the public involvement process, detailed in the Vision chapter.

Here, we apply the guiding principles to **parks and Open Space** goals, policies, and actions.



## STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS

- Parks, Open Space, and other Community Green Space preserve natural elements and shape community identity.



## MOBILITY

- A well-connected Open Space and trail network increases access and use.



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

- High-quality Community Green Space help attract a skilled workforce and employers.
- Responsible eco-tourism and outdoor recreation-based business capitalize on unique natural features and generate funding.



## EQUITY

- The Open Space network provides recreational and educational opportunities for everyone.
- Park facilities integrate universal design to improve access for people of all abilities.



## SUSTAINABILITY

- Well-designed and programmed parks and Open Space promote environmental stewardship.
- Sustainable management maximizes efficient water use, minimizes energy use, and helps protect and restore wildlife habitats and ecosystems.
- A well-connected Open Space and trail network reduces the need to drive to outdoor recreation and encourages active transportation options.



## COMMUNITY HEALTH

- Parks, Open Space, Community Green Space, and trails provide opportunities to be physically active, recreate outdoors, and connect with nature.
- Parks, Open Space, Community Green Space, and trails provide physical and psychological relief from the urban environment.



## In the future...

Parks and Open Space will remain essential parts of the community's infrastructure, indispensable to meet the needs of the public.

The park system will balance small, neighborhood-scale parks with larger active facilities to contribute to the community's livability and high quality of life.

The City and County will coordinate to enhance large-scale, regional recreational opportunities both to serve local residents and to attract visitors and investment.

Linear parks and trails will connect residents to public facilities and other destinations in a system of parks, Open Space, and trails. Multi-use trails will serve as integral parts of the Open

Space system, as well as key elements of the transportation system.

The County will implement their *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan*. The City will work to prepare a Parks and Recreation Facility Plan to guide future park development.

The County and City will preserve and maintain significant Open Space to conserve natural and cultural resources and environmental features, to create a sense of place and unique character, and to provide educational and low-impact recreational opportunities.

Preserving acequias, agricultural land, and unique natural features as Open Space will protect the natural resources and ecological functions of the land as well as the cultural aspects of the landscape and land uses.

## 10.1.2 Context & Analysis

### 10.1.2.1 PARKS OVERVIEW

Parks are an important quality-of-life factor contributing to the livability of our community. A high-quality system of parks and recreation resources provides a multitude of community benefits: protecting our environment, preserving wildlife habitat, strengthening local economies, attracting new businesses, contributing to the local tax base, increasing property values, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

As of 2016, the City and County manage approximately 317 developed parks, totaling over 1,600 acres. The City's ratio of developed parkland to population is about 2.8 acres per 1,000 people. This region has a well-distributed system of parks and recreation facilities that meets a wide range of needs. The City and County are now challenged to maintain existing infrastructure of aging parks and to bring its parks and recreation system into a new century of needs, wishes, and conditions.

Attractively designed and well-maintained parks are typically the most popular parks.



Image credit: City of Albuquerque

However, climate and soil characteristics create unique design challenges for the local park system. Arid conditions and poor soils affect the cost to provide large landscaped areas. Supplemental watering is necessary due to the low annual rainfall. Precipitation is usually of short duration, and runoff is heavy. Parks require continuing maintenance to prevent deterioration and maintain their attractiveness. Our climate also presents design challenges to accommodate open play areas that provide adequate shade in the summer.

Parks and Open Space are the only community facilities addressed in this chapter, while a wide range of other community facilities, such as those related to police, fire protection, solid waste, childcare facilities, schools, and healthcare clinics, are addressed in the **Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services chapter**. These other community facilities are often located within parks or on land adjacent to parks. Some city parks are also located on land owned by the Board of Education and managed to serve the adjacent school as well as the public.

Every effort should be made to achieve the goals of the co-location policies in siting parks and other facilities, such as the North Domingo Baca Park, Fire Station, and Multi-

To achieve our vision the City and County need to address **key challenges and strategies** summarized in this chapter:

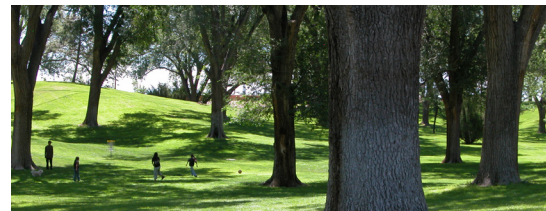
### CHALLENGES

- System expansion and maintenance needs competing for the same limited resources.
- Distribution of parks and Open Space based on community desires for more green space.
- Coordination of Open Space with other agencies' and private open spaces.
- Mandate to manage Open Space to provide public access while protecting natural resources.
- How to maintain high level of service as population grows and demographics change.
- Cost of acquiring land and timing acquisition in coordination with development.

### STRATEGIES

- Promoting parks and Open Space as economic engines that provide quality of life for residents and attractiveness for tourism and new jobs.

- Leveraging City and County funding for regional recreational facilities and eco-tourism opportunities.
- Preserving acequias and agricultural lands in the region.
- Identifying ecological zones and creating networks of Open Space, trails, and parks to connect them.
- Responding to changing demographics and community needs by providing more regional parks, active sport parks, urban agriculture as green space, and “signature” parks or Open Space.



High and low impact recreation opportunities.

Image credit: City of Albuquerque



generational Center and the Barelás hub of city services. However, it is also important that the Parks and Open Space System not be viewed as a land bank for future facilities.

### **County Parks & Recreation**

The County is responsible for maintaining and improving more than 1,000 acres of parks, athletic fields, streetscapes, and facility landscapes, including the Mesa del Sol Regional Park. This comprises 30 parks and athletic fields in the unincorporated area including Paradise Hills, North Valley, North Albuquerque Acres, South Valley, and in the East Mountains. Several of the parks have prescription trails programs to promote walking and healthy lifestyles. Bernalillo County uses its *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan* to guide future facility development.

### **City Parks & Recreation**

The City Parks & Recreation Department maintains and manages more than 287 park sites, which also include dog parks, trails, the New Mexico Veterans’ Memorial, Museum and Conference Center, and the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta Park and Event Center. The department participates in the Prescription Trails program. City staff includes individuals with expertise in landscape

design, construction, and programming to help people connect with each other and nature. As places to relax, play, learn, and come together, parks are essential to the health of urban communities and quality of life.

The City Parks & Recreation Department develops and maintains a network of over 160 miles of multi-use trails providing alternative transportation and recreation options for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians. The department works with the Greater Albuquerque Recreational Trails Committee (GARTC), who advises the City on trails planning and maintenance issues.

The Metropolitan Parks & Recreation Advisory Board consists of residents who support and guide the development of the City parks and recreation system.

### **10.1.2.2 OPEN SPACE OVERVIEW**

Open Space is land left in its natural state so that it may contribute to a community’s livability. Open Space preserves and protects natural features and cultural resources of the city and county, creates a sense of place for residents and visitors, and provides educational and recreational opportunities.

Some land is a candidate to preserve as Open Space because it is poorly suited for development. Other land is desirable as Open Space to separate areas that have developed with incompatible uses; to preserve a natural, cultural, or archaeological resource in perpetuity for future generations; or to preserve vistas and cultural or natural landscapes. Open Space conserves environmental features, natural, and cultural resources; provides educational and low-impact recreational opportunities; and places the built environment in context. Reasons for maintaining Open Space may include:

- Views of significant natural landscapes can contribute to psychological and emotional health.
- Low-impact recreation helps people of all ages be physically healthy.
- Cultural resources and environmental education deepen understanding of the surrounding landscapes and how humans used and benefited from the land.

Land preserved as Open Space is a mechanism for stewardship that protects many physical features for the appreciation of residents and visitors and improves livability in our region. Additional private lands are still proposed for future acquisition

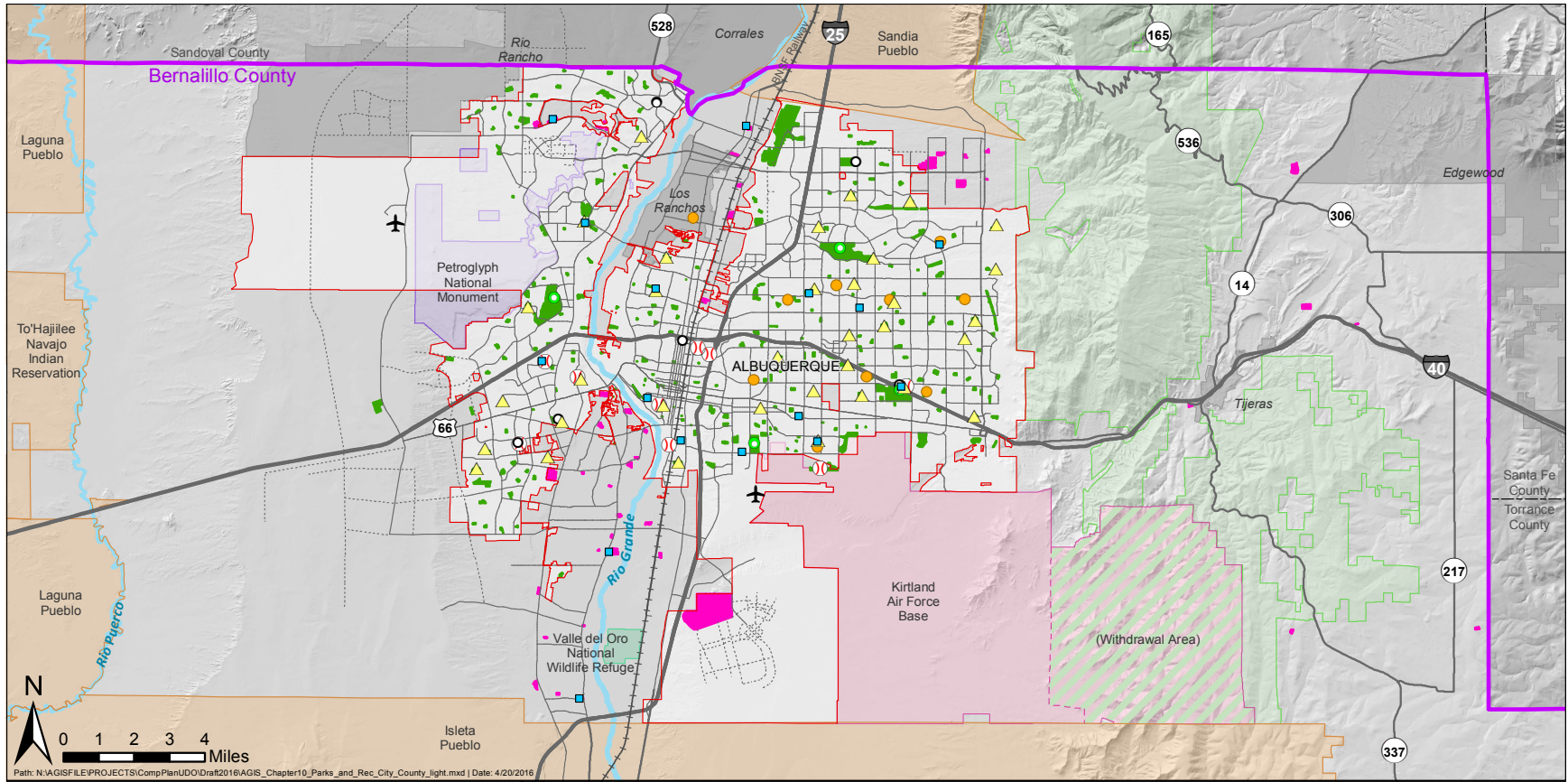
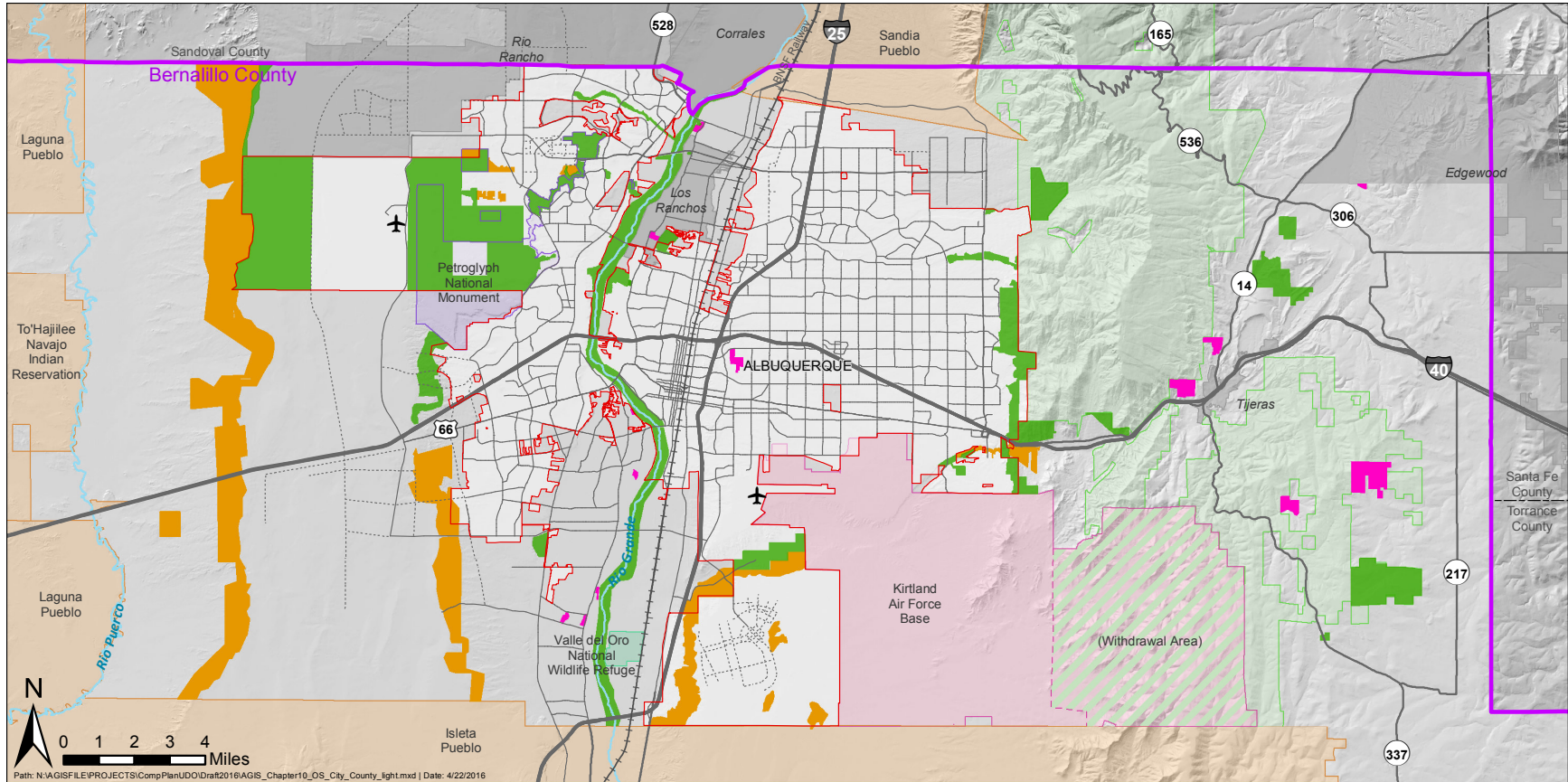


Figure 10-1: City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County Parks & Recreation Facilities





- Existing Roadway
- Proposed Roadway
- Bernalillo County Boundary
- Unincorporated Bernalillo County
- City of Albuquerque
- Other Jurisdiction

- Open Space**
- City
  - County
  - Proposed City/County

Figure 10-2: City of Albuquerque Major Public Open Space and Bernalillo County Open Space



Image Credit: CABQ Open Space Division

The Bosque is part of the largest cottonwood forest in North America.

or preservation and include major natural land forms, agricultural properties, and riparian areas.

Three of the region’s most significant and large Open Space areas – the Petroglyph National Monument, Rio Grande Valley State Park/Bosque, and Sandia Mountains/Cibola National Forest – are areas cooperatively managed by a variety of entities.

The Petroglyph National Monument, established in 1991, is cooperatively managed by the National Park Service (NPS) and the City. It includes federal and municipally owned land acquired for Open

Space before 1990. There are also adjacent Open Space lands outside the Monument boundary.

Rio Grande Valley State Park, established in 1983, is managed cooperatively by the City and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD), in conjunction with other regulating agencies – Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The State Park preserves the cottonwood forest, or Bosque, and the river floodway within the City and County.

Major Public Open Space in the foothills of the Sandia and Manzano Mountains provides a linear area separating the city’s eastern-most neighborhoods and the Cibola National Forest/Sandia Mountain Wilderness. Major trailheads and trails lead from Open Space into the National Forest (see also **Section 5.1.2.2 of the Land Use** chapter for more about Community Green Space).

### Trail Corridors

Trail corridors are linear open spaces, many of which link parks and Open Space. They include paved multi-use trails along arroyos and roads and natural trails in Open Space

areas, arroyos, and valley irrigation ditch systems as proposed by arroyo corridor facility management plans and other planning efforts, such as the Alameda Drain trail project.

Bernalillo County has adopted the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan*, and the City has adopted an updated Rank 2 *Bikeways and Trails Facility Plan*, which guides Parks and Recreation’s programs and investments in multi-use trails and bikeways. These two documents provide more detailed goals, policies, and guidance on this infrastructure. The City’s Open Space Division has *Trail and Trailhead Guidelines* that are used to develop new and update existing properties, which include approximately 100 miles of unpaved trails in 2016. For more information on the region’s trails and bikeways, see the Transportation chapter.

### Bernalillo County Open Space

The County’s Open Space program oversees 15 Open Space properties totaling almost 1,000 acres where it oversees dozens of resource-based recreation and environmental education activities and events each year. It also manages local food initiatives on five agricultural-based properties in the South Valley. Hiking, bird watching, geocaching,

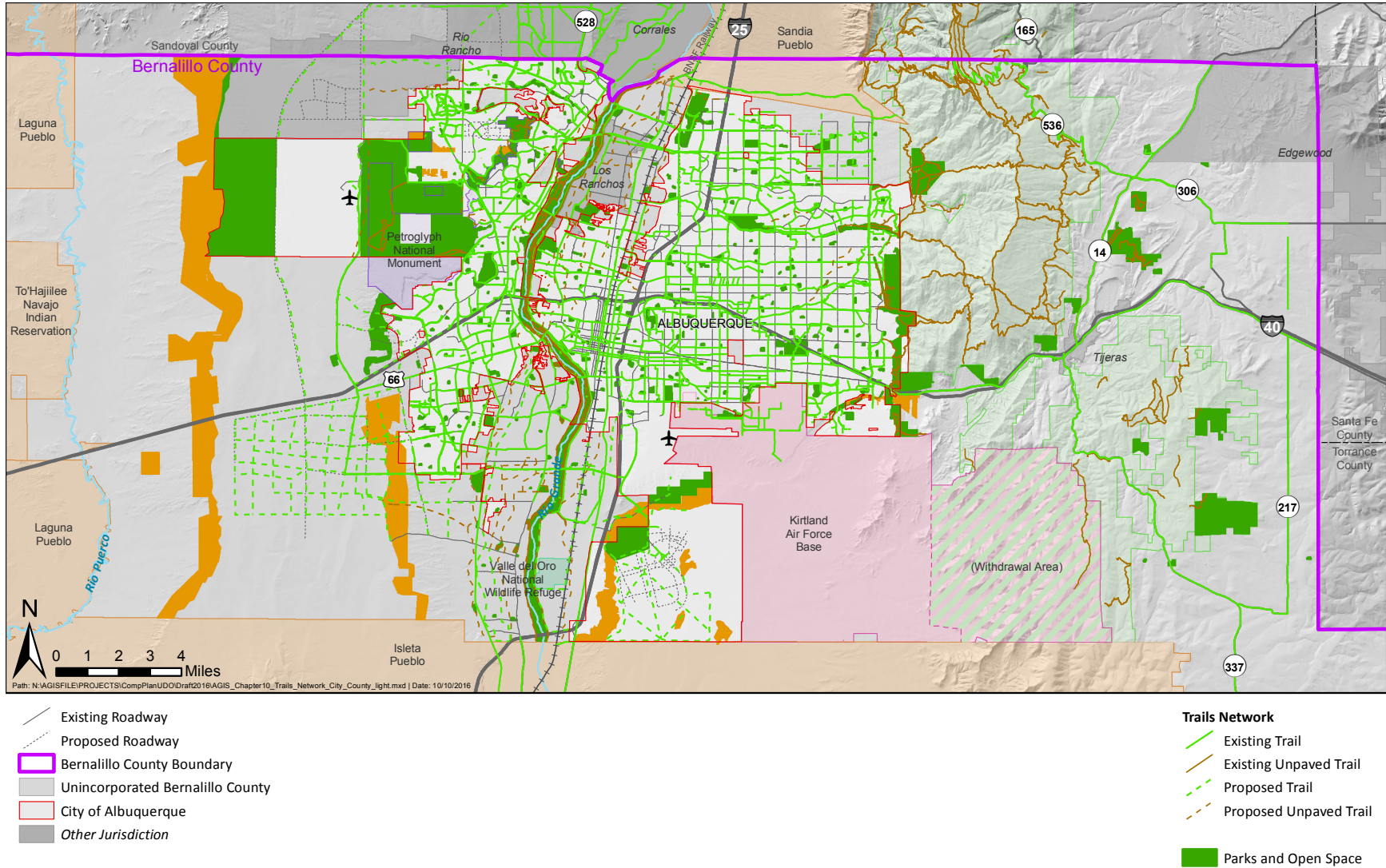


Figure 10-3: City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County Trails Network

and picnicking are some of the many activities available at Open Space properties. County agricultural Open Spaces are the focus for development of programming and economic development strategies to support local agriculture and promote local food.

Management plans have been adopted for many of the properties to guide their restoration and facility development. Bernalillo County uses its *PROS Master Plan* to guide future Open Space acquisition and development. The County is in the process of developing a conservation easement strategy to extend the reach of agricultural Open Space conservation efforts.

The County is a partner with AMAFCA and the USFWS in the development of the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in the South Valley and with the University of New Mexico (UNM) in the rehabilitation of the UNM North Golf Course. County staff also works closely with Cibola National Forest regarding Open Space properties in the East Mountains.

### City Open Space Division

The City manages Major Public Open Space (MPOS) lands to retain and enhance either their natural values or archaeological resources. They may be purchased outright

by the City or they may be jointly managed by the owner and another public agency.

The City Open Space Division within the Parks & Recreation Department manages MPOS lands, facilities, programs, and activities. This Division has expertise in natural resource conservation, archaeology, outdoor education, and low-impact recreation. The City's Open Space staff coordinates with agencies such as the MRGCD, NPS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USFWS, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, AMAFCA, and Rio Grande Nature Center State Park.

The City Open Space Division uses the Rank 2 MPOS Facility Plan, as well as multiple Rank 3 resource management plans and arroyo corridor plans to guide their land acquisition priorities and management strategies.

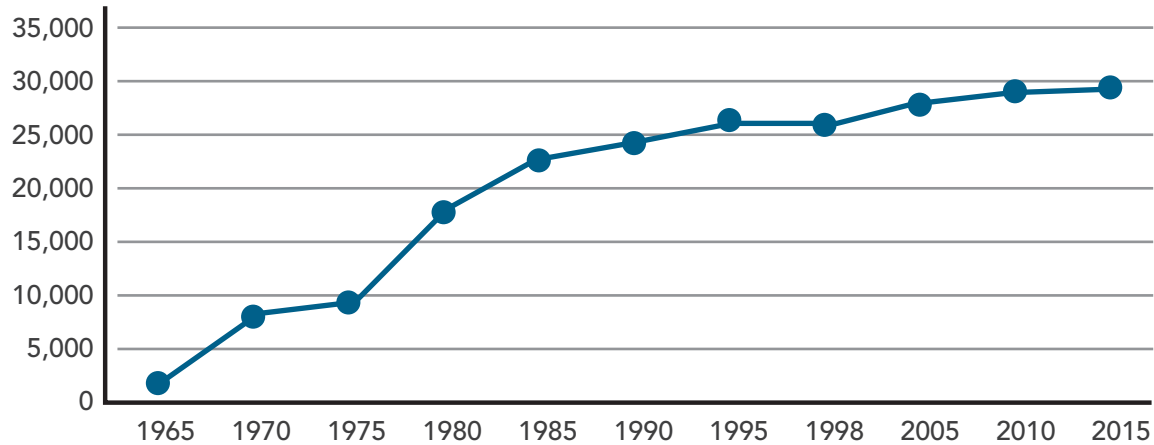
The 1975 and 1988 Comp Plans proposed an Open Space network of 49,000 acres, including trail corridors, parks, and other low-intensity uses. By the end of the 1960s, the City had acquired about 8,500 acres, and by the end of the 1980s, that total had reached nearly 25,000 acres. As a result of several quarter-cent sales tax periods, the City Open Space Division was able to purchase approximately 4,000 acres of land over 25



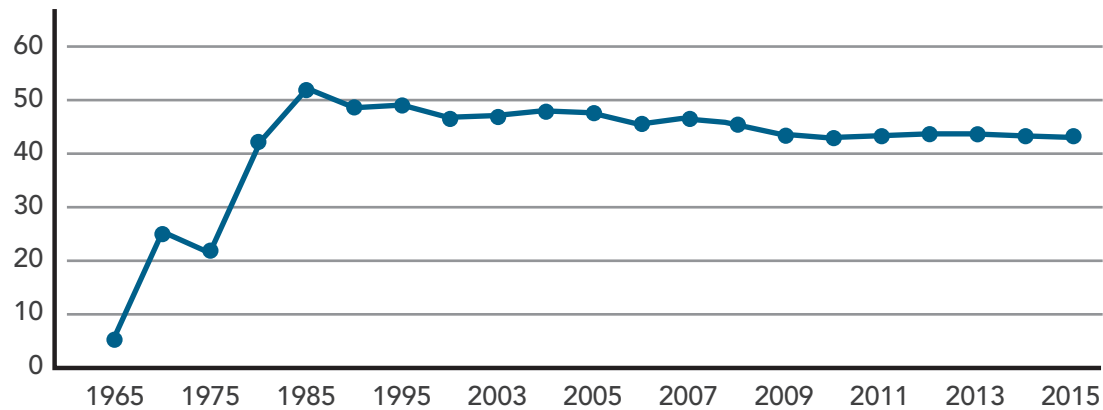
Image credit: City of Albuquerque



Recreational opportunities vary widely throughout the region – from hiking and biking trails to kayaking on the Rio Grande.



**Figure 10-4: Acres of City-Owned or Managed Major Public Open Space**



**Figure 10-5: Acres of Open Space per 1,000 County Residents (Level of Service)**

years, preserving in perpetuity some of the region’s most beloved and important natural and cultural resources, including lands in the Petroglyph National Monument and the Elena Gallegos Open Space. The City’s MPOS system currently protects the natural character of more than 29,000 acres of land.

The mid-eighties marked a turning point for the area’s Open Space level of service. Since then, the level of service has declined from 51.5 acres per 1,000 residents in 1985 to 43 acres per 1,000 residents in 2015, due to increasing population in the metropolitan region, along with fewer and smaller land acquisitions. The City has not adopted Level of Service standards for Open Space land.

Portions of Tijeras Arroyo, the Rio Puerco escarpments, and playa lakes (dry, sandy lake beds) in Mesa del Sol and the southwest mesa are among sites proposed for preservation as MPOS. Several City Open Space sites lie in the mountains east of the city. These include the San Antonio site and Gutierrez Canyon (both east of NM 14) in the Sandia Mountains. The Juan Tomas Mountain Park and Carolino Canyon Mountain Park (south of I-40 on NM Highway 337) lie in the Manzano Mountains. The Juan Tomas site is surrounded by the Cibola National Forest. No additional acquisitions are proposed in the mountains.

The City's system is complemented by the Rio Grande Valley State Park. This riparian habitat extends along the Rio Grande for 22 miles through Bernalillo County and beyond, from Cochiti Dam south to Belen. The 5,000-acre park lies primarily within the property of the MRGCD, and includes both land and water. The planning concept for the park is a balance between recreational use and habitat conservation. The City's Rank 2 *Bosque Action Plan* guides future planning for this irreplaceable community asset.

The City Open Space Advisory Board is an appointed board composed of citizen volunteers alternately by the Mayor and City Council, which meets at least once a month to evaluate and make recommendations on a broad range of City ordinances, policy resolutions, and administration of the open space system. Major concerns of the Board include investment policy for the Open Space Trust Fund, acquisition of selected additional open space lands, maintenance of the existing system, plans for improvements such as trails, revegetation, or visitor access, and coordination with the Bernalillo County open space system. Consistent with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act, all meetings of the Board are advertised in advance and are open for public participation.

### 10.1.2.3 FUNDING FOR PARKS & OPEN SPACE

A high level of capital investment is necessary to build and maintain major systems of facilities. Long-range financial planning for public infrastructure is overseen by the County's Capital Improvement Program and by the City's Capital Implementation Program (CIP).

Fiscal constraints dictate the public purchase of proposed park and Open Space land. Future large-scale acquisition to maintain or improve the level of service (LOS) as the area grows will need a concerted effort and priority by the public and decision-makers.

Options other than fee simple ownership (purchase of full ownership and title of a property) include easements, acquisition of development rights, public/private land agreements, and inter-agency agreements and licensing. Site conservation can also be achieved through special zoning districts that require lower impact uses and respectful buffers and edge treatments.



Image credit: City of Albuquerque



Cyclists of all ages benefit from our trails and educational resources.



## County Funding

The County funds capital development of parks and Open Space in a variety of ways, including:

- General obligation (GO) bonds
- New Mexico Legislative Capital Outlay and other grants
- Mill levy for Open Space acquisition
- Development impact fees

The County's six-year CIP Plan links the goals, needs, and vision of the public and the County's capital expenditure budgets. Every two years, the Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners updates the plan for major County capital projects. The planning concept is to conserve the natural habitat while providing for appropriate low-impact recreation opportunities.

The County funds programming, operations, and ongoing maintenance of parks and Open Space in a variety of ways including:

- General fund
- Mill levy for Open Space operations and maintenance
- User fees



Image credit: Bill Tondreau

*The local landscape provides stunning views for residents and visitors who take advantage of our parks, open space, and trail systems.*

## City Funding

Infrastructure funding comes from a variety of sources including federal grant programs, which generally require a local match, legislative capital outlay, and local property and gross receipt taxes. Additionally, tax incentives and public private partnerships leverage capital infrastructure funding in metropolitan redevelopment areas located in both the city and county.

Short-range infrastructure planning, reflected in the City's two-year General Obligation Bond Program and the County's two-year General Obligation Revenue Bond Program, more closely reflects their

growth strategy, fiscal position, and land use priorities at any given point in time. Service provision timing and costs are determined through these funding programs.

Land acquisition financing has depended on many sources of funds. The Open Space Trust Fund is invested and will provide increasing acquisition and maintenance funds for future budgets. In 2016, the City Council authorized a 20-year program of bond issues with two percent of general obligation bond proceeds dedicated to the Open Space program. This is estimated to provide approximately \$30 million for the Open Space system.

# 10.2 Goals, Policies & Actions

for Parks & Open Space



## Goal 10.1 Facilities & Access

Provide parks, Open Space, and recreation facilities that meet the needs of all residents and use natural resources responsibly.

## Goal 10.3 Open Space

Protect the integrity and quality of the region's natural features and environmental assets and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and education.

## Goal 10.2 Parks

Provide opportunities for outdoor education, recreation, and cultural activities that meet community needs, enhance quality of life, and promote community involvement for all residents.

## Goal 10.4 Coordination

Coordinate across disciplines, jurisdictions, and geographies to leverage limited resources, maximize efficiencies, and best serve the public's need for parks and recreation facilities.

Policies are organized to support each Goal. Many Policies have supporting Sub-policies, cross-references to other relevant policies, and implementing Actions to more clearly guide decision-making.





[ABC] indicates a policy or action for both the City and County

[BC] indicates a policy or action for Bernalillo County

[A] indicates a policy or action for the City of Albuquerque

# Goal 10.1 Facilities & Access

**Provide parks, Open Space, and recreation facilities that meet the needs of all residents and use natural resources responsibly.**

## POLICY 10.1.1

**Distribution: Improve the community’s access to recreational opportunities by balancing the City and County’s parks and Open Space systems with the built environment.<sup>1</sup> [ABC]**

- a) Protect and maintain a high-quality, accessible system of recreation facilities and sites sufficient to serve all areas.<sup>2</sup>
- b) Establish an interconnected network of parks, Open Space, and trails with safe pedestrian connections to community facilities, neighborhoods, and Centers.<sup>3</sup>
- c) Locate recreational facilities within Centers to address gaps in service and to be accessible by all modes of transportation, particularly foot and bicycle.<sup>4</sup>

- d) Encourage public open spaces and facilities in new developments to locate near active uses – commercial and community services, employment, and schools.<sup>5</sup>
- e) Coordinate park locations with drainage ways and local street alignments to maximize access to nearby residential neighborhoods without needing to cross an arterial road.<sup>6</sup>
- f) See **Policies 10.2.3 and 10.4.4** below related to trail connections.
- g) See **Transportation Goal 6.2** for policies related to multi-use trails.

## ACTIONS

- 10.1.1.1** Monitor levels of service for parks and recreation facilities, including the impact of recent and expected growth. [ABC]

**10.1.1.2** Evaluate costs, benefits, and impacts of new facilities. [ABC]

**10.1.1.3** Work with the private sector to establish motorized recreational vehicle areas separate from the pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle-oriented trail corridors and MPOS network. [A]

## POLICY 10.1.2

**Universal Design: Plan, design, program, and maintain parks, Open Space, and recreation facilities for use by people of all age groups and physical abilities.<sup>7</sup> [ABC]**

- a) Design and maintain landscaping and park features appropriate to the location, function, public expectations, and intensity of use. [ABC]

- b) Encourage subdivision platting that maximizes park and Open Space access and visibility. [A]
- c) See **Transportation Policy 6.5.2** for accessibility and mobility within the public right-of-way.
- d) See **Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services Policy 12.4.2** for additional ADA policies.

## ACTIONS

- 10.1.2.1** Identify and prioritize projects to address existing ADA deficiencies through coordination among the Bernalillo County Parks & Recreation and Public Works Departments and City of Albuquerque Parks & Recreation and Municipal Development Departments. [ABC]
- 10.1.2.2** Bring existing facilities into compliance based on the Bernalillo County 2014 Parks and Recreation Access Audit and Transition Plan or the City's parks and trails ADA audit and Transition Plan. [ABC]

- 10.1.2.3** Provide information to the public about parks, Open Space facilities, and trails that are ADA accessible and current efforts to improve accessibility within the system. [ABC]

## POLICY 10.1.3

### **Agriculture: Support food production and other agricultural uses in parks, Open Space, and public rights-of-way.<sup>9</sup> [ABC]**

- a) See **Land Use Policies 5.5.3 and 5.5.4** for agricultural protection in County Rural and Semi-Urban Development Areas.
- b) See **Heritage Conservation Policy 11.1.1** for agricultural protection.

## POLICY 10.1.4

### **Water Conservation: Employ low-water use and reclamation strategies to conserve water. [ABC]**

- a) Incorporate native vegetation and low water use species wherever possible, particularly in areas without easy access to irrigation. [ABC]

- b) Integrate irrigation, water conservation, drainage, and flood control functions within parks and Open Spaces with ecological preservation and recreational purposes.<sup>10</sup> [ABC]
- c) Incorporate natural drainage and infiltration techniques to irrigate parks, golf courses, and Open Space. [A]

## ACTIONS

- 10.1.4.1** Review and update technical standards that balance water resource management with ecological preservation and recreational purposes. [ABC]
- 10.1.4.2** Improve facilities and neighborhood parks using sustainable and green development practices.<sup>11</sup> [ABC]
- 10.1.4.3** Coordinate with MRGCD to develop best management practices and to accommodate facilities, such as trails, where appropriate and feasible, within parks and Open Space that do not compromise the function of the irrigation system for its designed purposes and are consistent with the Rio Grande Compact requirements. [ABC]



# Goal 10.2 Parks

**Provide opportunities for outdoor education, recreation, and cultural activities that meet community needs, enhance quality of life, and promote community involvement for all residents.**

---

## **POLICY 10.2.1**

**Park Types: Plan and implement a system of parks to meet a range of needs at different scales, including small neighborhood parks, community parks, active parks, regional parks, and linear parks.<sup>12</sup> [ABC]**

- a) Coordinate joint use and capital improvement programs to maximize effective use of tax payer dollars.
- b) Acquire, develop, and maintain major regional parks suitable for larger sports complexes or event spaces with convenient access to serve the wider region.
- c) Encourage developers to design, develop, and maintain parks through density bonuses and other incentives.<sup>13</sup>

- d) Prioritize parks planning and implementation as early as possible in the development process in fast-growing or underserved areas.<sup>14</sup>
- e) See **Community Identity Goal 4.3** for priorities in each Community Planning Area.
- f) See **Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services Policy 12.4.4** for co-location of facilities.

## **ACTIONS**

- 10.2.1.1** Use CIP, impact fees, and general fund allocations for park acquisition and development and examine alternative methods of financing such as public-private partnerships for parks and park maintenance. [ABC]
- 10.2.1.2** Work toward addressing gaps in service.<sup>15</sup> [ABC]

## **POLICY 10.2.2**

**Security: Increase safety and security in parks.<sup>16</sup> [ABC]**

- a) Minimize vandalism through adequate lighting, site design, and durable materials. [ABC]
- b) See **Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services Policy 12.3.4** on public safety.

## **POLICY 10.2.3**

**Multi-use Trails: Connect parks by designing, building, and maintaining trails to accepted standards.<sup>17</sup> [ABC]**

- a) See **Policy 10.4.4** below for trails along arroyos, ditches, and acequias.

- b) See **Transportation Goal 6.2** for policies related to multi-use trails.

**ACTION**

- 10.2.3.1** Amend the subdivision ordinance to require dedication of designated trail corridors. [BC]

# Goal 10.3 Open Space

**Protect the integrity and quality of the region’s natural features and environmental assets and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and education.**

## POLICY 10.3.1

**Open Space Acquisition: Acquire significant lands throughout the community to shape the urban form, conserve natural and cultural resources, and protect agricultural land.<sup>18</sup> [ABC]**

- a) Collaborate on Open Space acquisition to implement the Open Space network.
- b) Acquire trail, wildlife, and drainage corridors as important elements of the Open Space network.<sup>19</sup>
- c) Acquire lands prone to natural hazards as well as adequate buffers for public safety.<sup>20</sup>
- d) Acquire lands abutting significant features to ensure adequate protections of natural and cultural resources.<sup>21</sup>

- e) See **Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services Policy 12.4.5** for Rank 2 Facility Plans that guide Open Space acquisition and maintenance.
- f) See **Resilience & Sustainability Policy 13.4.4** for protecting areas with unique landforms and habitats.

**ACTIONS**

- 10.3.1.1** Prioritize and fund property acquisition consistent with the policies of the Comp Plan.<sup>22</sup> [ABC]
- 10.3.1.2** Work with landowners to define how, when, and what amount of proposed open space lands will be transferred into public ownership through coordination with the City of Albuquerque Open Space



Division, Open Space Advisory Board, and Bernalillo County Parks & Recreation.<sup>23</sup> [ABC]

**10.3.1.3** Explore land use tools such as density transfers, cluster development, incentives for providing on-site open space, land trading, optioning land early, and long-term purchase of Open Space.<sup>24</sup> [ABC]

**10.3.1.4** Explore funding sources for Open Space acquisition, including local tax initiatives and state and federal appropriations.<sup>25</sup> [ABC]

## POLICY 10.3.2

**Preservation: Identify and manage sensitive lands within the Open Space network to protect their ecological function.**<sup>26</sup> [ABC]

- a) Manage public access to best protect natural resources.
- b) Ensure that development within Open Space is compatible with its preservation purpose.<sup>27</sup>

c) See **Heritage Conservation Goal 11.3** for cultural landscapes and development adjacent to open space.

### ACTIONS

**10.3.2.1** Conduct slope, soil condition, and/or other appropriate surveys to determine Open Space property lines and identify sensitive lands. [ABC]

**10.3.2.2** Develop and implement site management strategies and preservation techniques for protected areas.<sup>28</sup> [ABC]

## POLICY 10.3.3

**Use: Provide low-impact recreational and educational opportunities consistent with the carrying capacity of the Open Space resource.**<sup>29</sup> [ABC]

### ACTIONS

**10.3.3.1** Analyze resource and use limitations for the Open Space network to identify which parts of the system should be protected and which parts are more suited

for public access and passive recreation.<sup>30</sup> [ABC]

**10.3.3.2** Develop standards to minimize impacts and environmental damage on areas suited for public access.<sup>31</sup> [ABC]

## POLICY 10.3.4

**Bosque and Rio Grande: Carefully design access to the Rio Grande, the Bosque, and surrounding river lands to provide entry to those portions suitable for recreational, scientific, and educational purposes, while controlling access in other more sensitive areas to preserve the natural wildlife habitat and maintain essential watershed management and drainage functions.**<sup>33</sup> [ABC]

- a) Minimize disturbance or removal of existing natural vegetation from the Bosque.<sup>34</sup>
- b) See **Policy 10.1.4** above related to balancing water management functions with ecological preservation and recreation.

- c) See **Heritage Conservation Policy 11.3.3** for policies related to land development adjacent to the Bosque.

## ACTIONS

- 10.3.4.1** Update the *Bosque Action Plan* to reflect documented changes including climate, wildlife, vegetation, recreation use and infrastructure, access, and restored areas. [ABC]
- 10.3.4.2** Acquire adjacent lands suitable for recreation uses that provide links to the river and Bosque through dedication, easements, leases, or fee simple purchases.<sup>35</sup> [ABC]
- 10.3.4.3** Evaluate the feasibility of a multi-use trail along the west side of the Rio Grande to enhance public access while protecting habitat and the ecological functions of the Bosque. [ABC]

## POLICY 10.3.5

### **Petroglyph National Monument: Preserve the volcanoes, key portions of the basalt flow, and the Northwest Mesa Escarpment as part of the Open Space network.**<sup>36</sup> [ABC]

- a) Identify and conserve the unique environmental, visual, recreational, archaeological, and historical qualities and opportunities of the Northwest Mesa Escarpment.<sup>37</sup> [A]
- b) Conserve the Escarpment as an entire unit with a recognizable relationship to the volcanoes that created it, the mesa top which borders it, and the arroyos that bisect it.<sup>38</sup> [A]
- c) Design public access and public facilities to be compatible with the sensitive nature of the Escarpment.<sup>39</sup> [A]
- d) Acquire land suitable for MPOS as funding becomes available to help conserve important ecological and archaeological features and include hiking trails.<sup>40</sup> [A]
- e) Limit utilities and roads to areas that are least sensitive to disturbance, avoiding the following areas: Piedras Marcadas Canyon,

the point where the mid branch of the San Antonio crosses the Escarpment, the Marsh peninsula, Rinconada Canyon, and the escarpment immediately south of Rinconada Canyon.<sup>41</sup> [A]

- f) See **Heritage Conservation Policies 11.3.4 and 11.3.6** related to development on lands within and adjacent to the Monument and on the Northwest Mesa.
- g) See **Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services Policies 12.1.4 and 12.1.5** for policies related to drainage infrastructure improvements that cross the Monument.

## POLICY 10.3.6

### **Escarpments: Preserve the ceja and Mesa del Sol escarpments as part of the Open Space network.**<sup>42</sup>

## ACTION

- 10.3.6.1** Preserve the ceja from Central Avenue south to the Bernalillo County limits as Open Space.<sup>43</sup> [ABC]



# Goal 10.4 Coordination

**Coordinate across disciplines, jurisdictions, and geographies to leverage limited resources, maximize efficiencies, and best serve the public's need for parks and recreation facilities.**

---

## **POLICY 10.4.1**

**Public Priorities: Engage the public to determine priorities and ensure equitable public investment.<sup>44</sup> [ABC]**

- a) Coordinate with the City Open Space Division, Open Space Advisory Board, and other interested parties to clarify the intent for the Open Space trust lands adjacent to Double Eagle II Airport.<sup>45</sup> [A]
- b) See **Community Identity Goal 4.2** for policies about community engagement, CPA assessments, and Citizens Academies.

## **POLICY 10.4.2**

**System Planning: Coordinate among departments and across jurisdictional boundaries to plan interconnected networks, manage natural resources, leverage public investment, eliminate gaps in service, and avoid duplication of effort.<sup>46</sup> [ABC]**

### **ACTIONS**

- 10.4.2.1** Identify, prioritize, and address gaps in service in City and County facilities through coordination among the City and County Parks & Recreation Departments, County Public Works, and the City Department of Municipal Development. [ABC]

- 10.4.2.2** Partner with non-profit recreation providers, volunteer groups, schools, and parent organizations to enhance access to recreational and environmental programs across the city and county.<sup>47</sup> [ABC]

- 10.4.2.3** Coordinate with the U.S. Forest Service in their updates to the Cibola National Forest and Cibola Wilderness Forest Plans. [ABC]

- 10.4.2.4** Prepare a strategy to address funding gaps for needed parks, MPOS, and recreational facilities.<sup>48</sup> [A]

## POLICY 10.4.3

**Co-located Facilities: Maximize opportunities for multi-functional, co-located, and joint use of compatible parks, Open Space, trails, and recreation facilities to best leverage public investment.**<sup>49</sup> [ABC]

- a) See **Policy 10.4.4** below for trails along arroyos, ditches, and acequias.
- b) See **Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services Policy 12.4.4** for co-location of facilities.

### ACTIONS

- 10.4.3.1** Coordinate siting of new public, joint-use facilities with other agencies, such as AMAFCA and APS. [ABC]
- 10.4.3.2** Explore the feasibility of co-location early in the project development phase by evaluating potential site or project constraints.<sup>50</sup> [ABC]

## POLICY 10.4.4

**Arroyos and Drainage: Work with MRGCD and AMAFCA to protect arroyos, drains, and acequias as part of Community Green Space.**<sup>51</sup> [ABC]

- a) Acquire, regulate, and manage trail corridors to protect natural features, views, drainage, and other functions and/or to link other areas within the Open Space network.<sup>52</sup> [ABC]
- b) Protect drainage or Open Space functions of arroyos from development impacts. [ABC]
- c) Use natural treatments for unchannelized arroyos.<sup>53</sup> [ABC]
- d) Design and maintain irrigation ditches and acequias to be compatible with neighborhood character.<sup>54</sup> [ABC]
- e) Encourage trails along suitable arroyos and irrigation ditches and design the facilities to protect the irrigation and drainage function.<sup>55</sup> [ABC]
- f) Employ safety measures, such as buffers and railings, for trail users.<sup>55</sup> [ABC]
- g) Establish maintenance responsibilities for arroyos within and outside of Open Space.<sup>56</sup> [ABC]

- h) Preserve arroyos to encourage residents' connections with nature.<sup>57</sup> [A]
- i) Connect the Open Space and trails network to suitable arroyos, drains, and acequias. [A]
- j) See **Policies 10.1.1 and 10.2.3** above about trails linking the parks network.
- k) See **Community Identity Goals 4.2 and 4.3** for the CPA assessment process and character-defining elements in each CPA.
- l) See **Land Use Policies 5.3.3 and 5.3.4** for policies that encourage cluster development to avoid the floodplain.
- m) See **Land Use Policies 5.5.1 and 5.6.1** for Community Green Space.
- n) See **Transportation Goal 6.2** for policies related to multi-use trails.
- o) See **Urban Design Goal 7.6.1** for stormwater infrastructure design considerations.
- p) See **Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services Policies 12.1.4 and 12.1.5** for policies related to drainage infrastructure.
- q) See **Resilience & Sustainability Policy 13.4.4** for protecting areas with unique landforms and habitats.



**ACTIONS**

- 10.4.4.1** Ensure adequate right-of-way for multiple-use of designated arroyos and coordinate design between the public and private sectors through subdivision and site planning. [ABC]
  
- 10.4.4.2** Coordinate multi-use trail planning with property owners adjacent to the irrigation ditch system and MRGCD facilities.<sup>58</sup> [ABC]
  
- 10.4.4.3** Plan and construct pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle crossings where designated arroyos and ditches intersect major streets and highways as a component of transportation projects. [ABC]
  
- 10.4.4.4** Work with MRCOG, all public agencies, and the New Mexico State Legislature to ensure that vacated irrigation ditch rights-of-way or easements are retained as part of the Open Space network, where appropriate and supported by the community. [BC]

Endnotes **1 through 58** indicate policies or actions incorporated from one of the City's Rank 2 area plans or Rank 3 sector development plans. Numbers in brackets refer to a row number in an associated spreadsheet of goals and policies, which can be found on the project website here: <http://abc-zone.com/document/abc-comp-plan-existing-city-policy-spreadsheet>.

## Endnotes

1. ABC Comp Plan [11], North I-25 SDP [603]
2. North I-25 SDP [572]
3. High Desert SDP [357], La Cueva SDP [394], Volcano Cliffs SDP [899], Volcano Heights SDP [929] [933], West Side Strategic Plan [1232]
4. Westside Strategic Plan [1231] [1232]
5. North I-25 SDP [604]
6. La Cueva SDP [396], North I-25 SDP [606], Volcano Cliffs SDP [929]
7. ABC Comp Plan [10], BC Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Facility Plan
8. [Unused]
9. Southwest Area Plan [771]
10. West Side Strategic Plan [1243]
11. Huning Castle Reynolds SDP [375], Los Duranes SDP [472]
12. ABC Comp Plan [8], Huning Castle Reynolds SDP [373], Volcano Cliffs SDP [929]
13. Volcano Cliffs SDP [929]
14. ABC Comp Plan [9] [10], East Gateway SDP [348], Westside Strategic Plan [1231]
15. ABC Comp Plan [10], Barelás SDP [216], East Gateway SDP [348]
16. Barelás SDP [215], Huning Castle Reynolds SDP [371]
17. ABC Comp Plan [19] [28] [175] [625], Southwest Area Plan [788]
18. ABC Comp Plan [2] [3], Southwest Area Plan [770], Volcano Cliffs SDP [923] [968]
19. ABC Comp Plan [3] [7] [19] [28] [175] [625], High Desert SDP [357], Volcano Cliffs SDP [913] [914] [915] [923], West Side Strategic Plan [1068] [1069] [1075] [1111] [1129]
20. ABC Comp Plan [2]
21. West Side Strategic Plan [1234]
22. Volcano Heights SDP [963]
23. West Side Strategic Plan [1132] [1230]
24. Volcano Heights SDP [964], West Side Strategic Plan [1229]
25. Volcano Heights SDP [964], West Side Strategic Plan [1229]
26. ABC Comp Plan [5], Los Duranes SDP [466]
27. ABC Comp Plan [4]
28. West Side Strategic Plan [1228]
29. ABC Comp Plan [2] [4], West Side Strategic Plan [1241]
30. West Side Strategic Plan [1144]
31. ABC Comp Plan [3], Coors Corridor SDP [237], West Side Strategic Plan [1241]
32. [Unused]
33. Comp Plan [3], Barelás SDP [202], Coors Corridor Plan [237], West Side Strategic Plan [1076]
34. Coors Corridor Plan [240]
35. Coors Corridor Plan [237], Los Duranes SDP [457]
36. ABC Comp Plan [5]
37. Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan [678] [679] [697], West Side Strategic Plan [1148]
38. Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan [678] [679] [697]
39. Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan [685], West Side Strategic Plan [1148] [1241]
40. Volcano Cliffs SDP [923]
41. Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan [685]
42. ABC Comp Plan [5], Southwest Area Plan [825], West Side Strategic Plan [1132]
43. Southwest Area Plan [825]
44. West Side Strategic Plan [1033]
45. West Side Strategic Plan [1143]
46. North Valley Area Plan [641], West Side Strategic Plan [1231] [1241]
47. West Side Strategic Plan [1231]
48. West Side Strategic Plan [1231]
49. West Side Strategic Plan [1044] [1059] [1263], BC Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Facility Plan
50. West Side Strategic Plan [1262]
51. North I-25 SDP [606], North Valley Area Plan [641], Volcano Cliffs SDP [919], West Side Strategic Plan [1059]
52. ABC Comp Plan [7], North Valley Area Plan [614]
53. Volcano Cliffs SDP [913] [914] [920], West Side Strategic Plan [1069]
54. North Valley Area Plan [648]
55. North Valley Area Plan [637] [638] [640]
56. Volcano Cliffs SDP [919] [921]
57. Volcano Cliffs SDP [901]
58. North Valley Area Plan [614]